

MACOMB COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

RUBELLA INFORMATION SHEET

What is rubella?

Rubella is a rash illness caused by a virus. It is also known as German measles.

Who can get rubella?

Persons who have not had rubella (mostly people born after 1956) and who have not been given live rubella vaccine.

What are the symptoms?

- rash: flat, reddish-pink spots about 2-3mm across on the head and/or body which last a day or two
- fever
- swollen glands behind the ears and down the side of the neck

How long after exposure do symptoms first begin?

Symptoms usually begin 14-21 days after exposure.

How is rubella spread?

Rubella is spread by contact with droplets from the nose and throat of a person with rubella.

How long is a person contagious?

Persons with rubella are contagious for about 1 week before to at least 4 days after onset of the rash.

Are there complications?

In the majority of persons who get rubella, the disease causes no more inconvenience than a common cold. However, rubella is known to cause damage to a baby developing in the uterus if a woman gets the disease while she is pregnant.

Is there treatment for rubella?

There is no specific treatment for rubella other than rest.

How can rubella be prevented?

Rubella can be prevented by vaccination. All healthy children should be vaccinated at 12-15 months of age with measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine. A second dose should be administered at 4-6 years of age.